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Khrushchev, Nikita  
Sec 4.01.24 Time-Life Inc  
V Little, Brown & Co

# The Khrushchev Memoirs

WHEN Time-Life Inc. and Little, Brown & Co. announced on Friday, 6th November that they were to publish the reminiscences of the former Soviet leader under the title *Khrushchev Remembers*, the American edition of this 275,000 word book was already in proof. The translator had completed his mammoth task, Mr. Edward Crankshaw, the well-known authority on Russian affairs, had written an introduction, commentary and notes, and the book had reached the proof stage without any news of it reaching the outside world.

There were still ten days of secrecy to go when the president of Little, Brown, Arthur Thornhill, telephoned to André Deutsch to tell him that a British edition would be called for (Time-Life have a minority holding in André Deutsch Ltd.). *The Bookseller* asked Miss Diana Athill, director of the firm, how the secrecy was observed at this end. Miss Athill had this to tell:

"The telephone call came through to the weekly editorial meeting at Great Russell Street, and André Deutsch answered it. He immediately began to look stunned. Observing this, the editors stopped talking and began to listen, but he became more enigmatic with every word and they learnt nothing. When he hung up his expression of shock was overlaid by one of embarrassment, because all he could tell them was that he couldn't tell them anything.

"His offer for 'Book X' was accepted on 2nd November, whereupon the machinery for producing the British edition of a 672-page book with 80 illustrations in time for publication on 21st January had to be set in motion at once, before he had seen the material or could tell his staff what it was. Not a minute could be lost, since a book of a kind which usually takes about nine months to produce was having to be pushed through in about nine weeks. Everyone caught the spirit of the thing, even without knowing what

'the thing' was, and the office buzzed with activity, and with bets on the identity of the author of 'Book X'.

"When a set of proofs arrived from Boston, the book's contents were seen to exceed all expectations—but still only by André, and after a day or two by the production department (it really isn't possible to design a jacket for a book without title or author). It was not until word came from Boston on Saturday 7th November, that the embargo could be lifted, apart from that. André and I spent most of that Saturday composing a 'release' and driving about London delivering it to the press—which reminded us agreeably of the firm's early days, when we often had to do as much delivering as reading."

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